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ISLAND TIMES

FEBRUARY 2005

A community newspaper covering Peaks Island and Casco Bay

FREE

Island man killed in Florida accident

BY DAVID TYLER

Peaks Island resident James Bergstrom was struck by a car and killed on Feb. 2 while on vacation in the Florida Keys with his wife, Christine King.

A memorial service to celebrate his life will be held on Sat., Feb. 12 at 1:30 p.m. at the Brackett Memorial United Methodist Church.

The accident occurred at 11:45 p.m. on Wed., Feb. 2 in Tavernier, Fla. A Key Largo resident driving south on Route 1 struck Bergstrom as he stepped off the median, according to a Feb. 4 article on the Web site for the Florida Keys Key-Note, based in Marathon. The driver of the car was not charged, according to the KeyNote report, which was from the Florida State Highway Patrol.

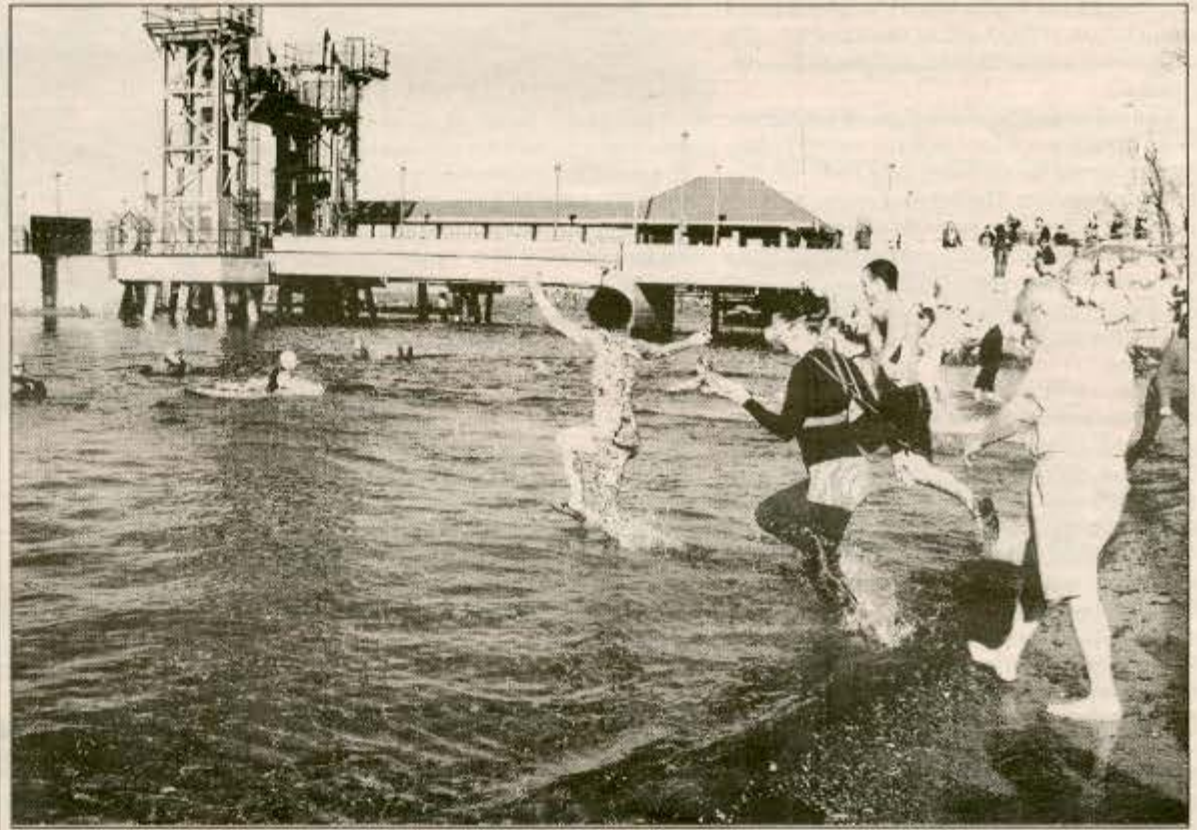
The accident took place in front

of the Copper Kettle restaurant in Tavernier. Fatal crashes on the Florida Keys highway were the highest in recent memory in 2004, according to the paper, with 33 deaths. Bergstrom was the second person to be killed on the highway in 2005.

"What a shock," said Bergstrom's Whitehead Street neighbor and friend, Richard Kinney.

Kinney has known Bergstrom since he and his wife moved to Peaks Island several years ago. Bergstrom and his wife fixed up the cottage they purchased on Whitehead Street. Several friends from Massachusetts, where Bergstrom is from, came up and helped out, Kinney said. While working on the house, "they didn't have a place to go so we put them up

please see **BERGSTROM**, page 8



Those wacky islanders!

In an effort to raise money for tsunami victims, islanders got all dressed up and jumped into the ocean during an impromptu festival of sorts on Peaks Island recently. Photo by Tim Nihoff

Shuttle bus part of plan during Ocean Gateway construction

BY DAVID TYLER

During the construction of Ocean Gateway some island residents who now park on city-owned land in the Portland Ocean Terminal will have to use a parking lot at the International Marine Terminal on Commercial Street and will be transported to and from the Casco Bay Lines terminal in shuttle buses.

"There will be some on-site [parking] during construction, but obviously some places where people are parking now are going to be under construction," said Larry Mead, Portland's assistant city manager. "So we can't use it all, and there is going to have to be some give somewhere. And there is no immediate parking nearby. So the best we can do in the interim period is look at a shuttle option."

Details of that shuttle, and the impact Ocean Gateway will have on island parking will be worked out after the company who wins the bid for the project submits its construction plan. There will be a period of 18 to 24 months where construction will have an impact on city-owned lots that are now used for parking, according to Ben Snow, manager of marine operations for the city's Department of

Transportation and Waterfront.

Both Snow and Mead said they anticipate the construction to proceed in phases, so that not all island parking will be affected at the same time. "We hope to have rolling closures, as we work on different areas of the site," Snow said.

Bids for building Ocean Gateway, a city-sponsored cruise ship terminal with commercial development, are scheduled to be opened on Feb. 23. City officials will go over the construction schedule with the winning bidder. "Once we've got that understood, then we'll develop a plan to handle the parking and the shuttle," said Mead.

Work on Ocean Gateway could begin as early as the spring, but it's not clear how quickly island parking will be changed as a result. Parking permits are not being sold for more than three months, said Tynnia Staples, director of security for the city's transportation and waterfront department. She does not expect a huge impact on parking this summer, "but we really don't know yet," until the bids are opened.

The two island parking lots that will be directly impacted by Ocean Gateway construction are the

please see **PARKING**, page 8

BY DAVID TYLER AND MARY LOU WENDELL

So you wonder what people on Peaks Island do in the winter? Read on...

It was a sunny and warm Sunday morning this past Feb. 6, and the atmosphere on the beach next to the ferry landing was, in a word, festive.

More than a hundred people were already there by 10 a.m. They lined up on the public dock and on the ferry landing dock to get the best look at the crazy islanders who volunteered to jump into the frigid water to raise money for victims of the Indian Ocean Tsunami.

The fundraiser was organized by island business people as a way for Peaks Island residents to help those who live near the sea and on islands in the Indian Ocean basin devastated by the tsunami.

The fire department waited nearby with their trucks, just in case. The dozens of people who made it onto the crowded beach were jumpy in anticipation of the event. A big bonfire roared with heat. Another smaller fire was going for marshmallow toasting, of course. How could anyone have a midwin-

ter ocean dip to raise money without roasting marshmallows? There was a table set up with hot chocolate and a can for last-minute contributions.

Then, all of a sudden, they were in: about 20 people ran into the frigid water as the crowd cheered. They didn't have to run very far because the tide was high. People laughed and screamed. And they were on their way out of the water even faster than they went in. One woman fell down on her way out. She couldn't get out fast enough! Friends waited on the beach ready with open towels for their chilly buddies.

Soon, a second wave of people ran into the water. A lot of them were dressed up, women in men's suits. Jane Newkirk, of the Gem Gallery, got the loudest screams as she had an artist friend help paint her body with black acrylics.

"It was great," Newkirk said af-



Marcy Alves got an "icecream headache" after testing the frigid water of Casco Bay. Photo by Mary Lou Wendell

terward. "It felt invigorating. It was good time to practice my back-

please see **OCEAN DIP**, page 6

Peaks to get hazardous waste facility

BY JENNIFER BLOOD

Peaks Island will be the first Casco Bay island to have its own hazardous waste collection site.

The state Planning Office has approved a \$100,000 grant for the City of Portland, which will be used to build a household hazardous waste collection facility on Peaks Island. The collection site will be constructed at the Peaks Island transfer station, and will be open throughout the summer months, according to Tom Fortier, the city's island/neighborhood administrator. The disposal of items like pesticides, motor oil, paint thinners, and other household chemicals will all be handled through the fa-

cility. Construction of the facility is scheduled to begin in January of 2006.

Until now, there has been no facility on a Casco Bay island for the disposal of household hazardous waste. It has been up to individual residents to transport waste to the mainland for proper disposal. Often, however, the logistics of carting half-empty containers of paint thinner and pesticides across the bay discourages environmentally sound disposal practices. "When you think about where oil and pesticides... have been going all this time, it's almost one of those questions you don't want to hear an answer to," said Fortier. "Recognizing

that islands have environmental limits even more so than the mainland, I believe this is the single most important issue facing the Peaks Island community."

Additional state funding will be sought for the facility, as the current market rate for the disposal of

please see **WASTE**, page 9

Officer Steve Taylor leaves Peaks

BY MARY LOU WENDELL

Officer Steve Taylor arrived at my house at around 9 p.m. on a recent Friday night for an interview about his last day of work on Peaks Island. He took some time out of his late night shift for the interview, so when he arrived he was in full uniform. He came in from the snow and took his boots off immediately. In less than a minute, he was on the kitchen floor after my 3-year-old asked him to

play. My son was thrilled about his new friend as Taylor pointed to and explained the different pieces of equipment, especially his radio, that he was wearing.

Taylor, who patrolled on Peaks for just three years, was in his element. He was best known for his focus on community policing, which allows officers to get to know residents in the community in which they work. He got to know

please see **TAYLOR**, page 7

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In Brief

Gravel pit plans

A discussion of the restoration and potential uses of the former gravel pit at the Jan. 18 meeting of the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association (PINA) led to the creation of a temporary committee to explore those options.

The 5.5-acre city-owned gravel pit, which is no longer used for Department of Public Works, could be restored and dedicated to community uses. The Junior League of Portland has offered to provide volunteer help and possible financial assistance to help improve the site for a project day on April 30. However, the Junior League needs details of the project by March 1, "so we are under pressure to respond," said Joe Kane, PINA's president, who was named chair of the temporary committee. Kane said the spirit of these improvements should focus on recreational uses. But he said the temporary committee has not made any decisions or recommendations yet. Given the time constraints, Kane said the committee will give people an opportunity to respond to their recommendations.

The city has committed \$25,000 towards loaming and seeding of the gravel pit, according to Tom Fortier, island/neighborhood administrator. The parcel is zoned for open space and recreation, he said. "I want to emphasize my commitment to restore the gravel pit," Fortier said. "It's the right thing to do." Fortier said it's up to the community to decide how it wants to use the former gravel pit. But he said any short-term improvements should not make that make impact any future long-term use of the site. "We don't want to add projects that are going to have to be torn down," he said.

At the Jan. 18 PINA meeting, suggestions for the Junior League project included natural restoration, creating a community garden or creating a community park. Long-term suggestions for the gravel pit include a skateboard park, a community center, af-

fordable housing, or natural restoration into a park.

Kane said the committee will also suggest that a permanent committee be created to come up with plans for long-term use of the former gravel pit. The following are on the temporary committee: Brad Burkholder, Barbara Hoppin, Joe Kane, Dana Leath, Walter Schneller, Michelle Braum Tranes and Jenny Yasi.

-David Tyler

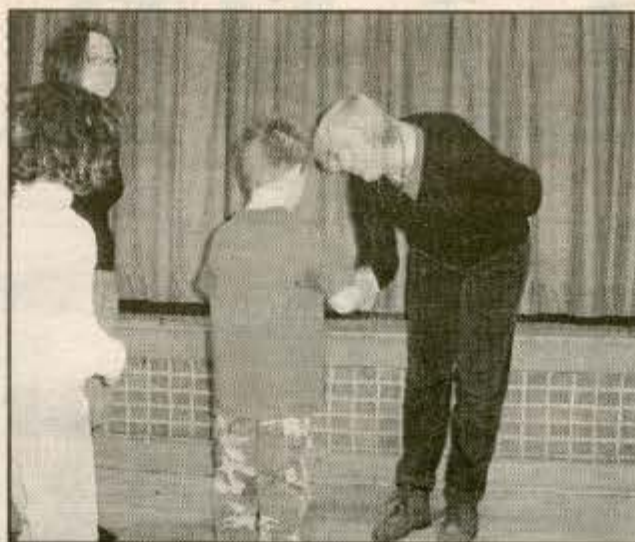
Machigonne off-line

The main ferry to Peaks Island, the *Machigonne*, will be out of service on Feb. 16 and 17 for scheduled maintenance. There will be no carry ferry on those dates. The *Machigonne* is also tentatively scheduled for its biannual U.S. Coast Guard drydock inspection on March 19. That inspection will not occur any earlier than March 19, but it might occur later due to weather and shipyard availability, according to Pat Christian, general manager for Casco Bay Lines. For example, the *Machigonne* would not be sent to Rockland for its inspection in a storm, he said. Normally, the inspection requires the ferry to be in Rockland for three-to-four weeks. There will be alternative transport for vehicles during this period, but it will require a reservation to be made. Call the Casco Bay Lines ticket office at 774-7871 to make a reservation.

-David Tyler

Ventres property to be sold

The three homes owned by the late Albert E. Ventres are being appraised and will be sold, according to Don Kopp, of the Portland law firm Drummond, Woodsum & MacMahon. Kopp, who is the executor of Ventres' estate, said he will supervise the sale. Ventres, who was 84, was discovered on Nov. 4, already dead, at one of his homes on Prince Avenue. He owned two homes on Prince Avenue and one home on Pleasant Avenue. It is not clear when he died, but it is possible that he had been in the home, dead, since late spring. Neighbors said Ventres preferred to be left alone. Kopp also located Ventres' only surviving relative, his sister Evangeline Mary



Maine's First Lady Karen Baldacci shook hands with all of the students at the Peaks Island School during a recent visit, which was arranged by island residents Scott and Nancy Nash.

Photo by Mary Lou Wendell

Ventres. His sister is 78 and living in a nursing home in Waterville. Following Ventres' wishes, he was cremated, with no memorial service, according to Kopp. Those interested in purchasing any of Ventres' Peaks Island property should call Kopp at 772-1941.

The entire Ventres estate, including proceeds from the sale of the island homes, was left to the Coptic Fellowship, based Wyoming, Mich., according to the wishes set forth in Ventres' 1979 will. Kopp said Ventres has been associated with the Coptic Fellowship "for a long time." At one point in his life, Ventres may have lived in Michigan, where the fellowship is active, Kopp said. The Coptic Fellowship "is a philosophical organization that seeks to support individual spiritual development," according to the group's Web site. The fellowship dates back thousands of years to a secret order founded in Egypt called the White Brotherhood, according to the Web site. The group's modern founder is an Egyptian named Haimd Bey, who established the Coptic Fellowship in 1937 in Los Angeles, Calif.

-David Tyler

Ferry rate increase

Casco Bay Lines rate increases of 25 cents per round-trip ticket, \$1.25 per commuter book and \$5 per vehicle trip were approved by the Casco Bay Island Transit District (CBITD) Board of Directors at its Dec. 17 meeting. The rate increases took effect on Feb. 1 and apply to all islands served by Casco Bay Lines. The board also voted a 10 cent increase for children's tickets and a 15 cent increase for senior tickets. There are no changes in the cost of monthly passes or in freight rates. The hike in ticket prices were necessary due to much higher diesel fuel costs, according to Pat Christian. Diesel fuel has been over 75 cents per gallon higher than last winter. If the rate hike had not been approved, CBITD would have faced a budget deficit of between \$100,000 and \$130,000, according to Christian.

-David Tyler

Deer program update

As of Jan. 30, 13 deer had been killed as part of the Peaks Island deer management program. The goal of the program is to remove as many deer as necessary to keep the deer population to the island's carry capacity, which is about 15-to-20 deer, according to Tom Fortier, the city's island/neighborhood administrator. Island resident Robert Briggs volunteers to shoot the deer, and is accompanied each time by Fortier and Phil Bozenhard, of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Each hunt begins at 4 p.m. and ends before 10 p.m.; this year there has been a hunt on Jan. 18 and Jan. 25. The program takes place from a stationary site and moving or running deer are not shot at, according to Fortier. There will be probably

please see BRIEFS, page 3

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Ice fills Casco Bay on a freezing cold day this January. (By the way, this is the very same spot where just a few weeks after this picture was taken a bunch of islanders jumped in the water to raise money for tsunami victims. See story on page 1.)

Photo by Arne Pearson

Goodbye January!

Ferry, water taxi crews brave freezing spray, ice

BY DAVID TYLER

When the weather becomes frigid, Gene Willard, who owns Portland Express Water Taxi, brings a rubber mallet on board.

It's an essential tool to knock off the thick coating of ice that builds up on his water taxi. When the weather is the really cold, he wields the rubber mallet every two trips. "Sometimes you knock six inches off of the stern," he said. "The ice doesn't affect the stability of the boat, but it really slows the boat down."

Ice forms every place that spray hits the boat. The problem is the worst when a northwest wind is blowing. "It's the coldest wind," said Willard, who is also a Casco Bay Lines captain. "As soon as spray hits the boat, it's frozen."

Freezing spray is one of the many challenges for those who crew the boats that keep islanders connected to the mainland during the winter. Cold weather, winter storms and snow are other hazards ferry and water taxi crew have to face.

So far, this winter has not been as cold as it was last year. "I remember going through skim on the surface in late November," said Willard, about the winter of 2003-2004.

But during the last two weeks of January, Casco Bay experienced an intense cold snap. From Jan. 16-Jan. 31 every day was be-

low the normal temperature, except Jan. 30, according to Tom Hawley, meteorologist at the National Weather Service Office in Gray.

On Peaks Island the temperature went below zero on two days, hitting minus 1 on Jan. 21 and minus 2 on Jan. 22, according to a weather station maintained for the Web site Weather Underground.

"Once you start getting those below-zero readings, ice forms very, very quickly," Hawley said. Seawater freezes at around 28 degrees compared to 32 degrees for fresh water, because the salt lowers the temperature at which seawater freezes, he said.

Ice is another concern for ferry and taxi operators. It's less of an issue for vessels run by Casco Bay Lines, which are large enough to break through the ice that forms in the bay. "You might slow down a little, but the ice is not that thick," said Capt. Mike Bryant, of Casco Bay Lines. "It doesn't really freeze that solid."

What can get complicated is when high tides float thicker ice off the shorelines or down from rivers into the bay, Bryant said. That ice, which moves with the tide and wind, can surround docks and slips, trapping smaller vessels.

Ice and ice dams play havoc with operations of the Chebeague Island Transportation Company, that island's main ferry route to the mainland. In the second half of January, the ice was so bad that trips after 6:15 could not be run. The transportation company's boat cannot break through the ice, and operating it in ice is harmful to the vessel. This problem was much worse for the

please see COLD, page 6

BRIEFS, from page 2

be between two and three more hunts during this year's program. In 1999, 243 deer were shot on Peaks Island. The deer management program that year cost \$60,000 for Peaks Island alone, Fortier said. Now, the entire year's program costs less than \$300. "I don't think people realize how much time and effort goes into a successful program," Fortier said. The deer which are killed are distributed to island residents from a list that Fortier maintains. Call Fortier at 756-8288 if you want to be put on that list.

-David Tyler

Aucocisco III progress

Casco Bay Lines' newest vessel, *Aucocisco III*, has taken shape at Steiner Shipyard in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. In December, the vessel was painted and insulation installed. Windows on the main deck and second level were put in and piping for the heating and cooling system was installed. The name on the stern was also installed on the port bulwarks. At the end of January and beginning of February members of the New Vessel Technical Team, including Capt. Bill Wanzler, Capt. Larry Legere, Capt. Gene Willard and Maintenance Manager Howard Woodside were at the shipyard for several days

for on site inspections, said Pat Christian, Casco Bay Lines general manager. Despite the shipyard being damaged by hurricanes in the fall, Christian said construction is on budget and on schedule. He expects the vessel to be in service some time in May. There will be a ceremony marking the event, but Christian is still working out the details. *Aucocisco III* will replace the 37-year-old *Island Holiday*.

-David Tyler

High test scores on Peaks

The Peaks Island School was recently recognized by the state Department of Education for its achievement on Maine's Learning Results. "An important aspect of the *No Child Left Behind Act* is the recognition of schools achieving consistently high performance in reading and math," according to a letter that was sent to the Superintendent of Portland Schools, Mary Jo O'Connor, from state education Commissioner Susan Gendron. The Peaks Island School was recognized as a "consistently high performing school" for grade four reading. This means that 70 percent of the fourth-graders who took the achievement test last year met or exceeded the standards, according to the letter.

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Island Views

Family dinners American Legion style

BY DAVID TYLER

It's midwinter on Peaks Island and people can get a little stir-crazy. But this winter, there's a new place to go every week to get out of the house and have a family-style meal.

The dinner is held every Wednesday night at the American Legion, Randall MacVane Post 142. The dinner was started in October, and an average of 30 people come each week, with sometimes as many as 50 or 60 taking part in the meal.

Carolyn Parker and her husband, Bob Love, are the main volunteers who cook and prepare for the weekly gathering. Love, who served as a Marine in Okinawa in the late 1950s and early 1960s, is a member of Post 142. The Legion's finance officer, Steve Pederson, buys and delivers the food. And Legion members volunteer in the kitchen to help Parker and Love.

"We decided to not just make it for the general people who go up there, but try to entice other people to come up, by keeping the cost very low," she said. Smoking is also not allowed during the meal. The dinner, which is served from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., is \$7 for adults and \$5 for seniors and children.

"We try to get people out," she said. "Because in winter, everybody gets the doldrums. A lot of people really look forward to it on Wednesdays," said Parker. "We get a lot of regulars." For those who are housebound, Legion members put together dinners and deliver them.

Parker came up with the idea of holding weekly dinners as the Legion as a way to

raise money for the annual Memorial Day Parade, sponsored by Post 142. The post also puts on a meal for islanders and all parade participants. In the past, members ran a bottle-collection drive to raise money for the parade. But one member, who used to transport the bottles to the mainland, was no longer able to do so, so the Legion stopped collecting bottles.

Although this is not a huge money-maker, "it seems to work out," Parker said. "We're not trying to be in competition with a restaurant. It's just something to get people out, and hopefully we can make a few dollars for the Memorial Day parade." Parker decided to hold it on Wednesday, because that's an evening that the only restaurant open in the winter, the Cockeyed Gull, is closed.

Parker said the menus are geared towards "comfort food." Examples of offerings served at some of the recent dinners include meatloaf and mashed potatoes, roast beef, chicken, spaghetti and meatballs. She also prepares three or four different vegetables, so that vegetarians can take part. "We try to put out a lot of different things," Parker said.

Special dinners are being planned for upcoming holidays. A Valentine's meal will be offered on Feb. 12 at 6 p.m., featuring entertainment by a group of musicians that Chris Tuttle is assembling. There will also be a St. Patrick's Day meal on March 17.

Although whipping together a weekly meal for 30 may sound daunting, it's nothing new for Parker and Love.

About five years ago they used to make Sunday morning brunches at the Legion. "It



From left, Bob Love, Carolyn Parker and Steve Pedersen all work together to provide dinners at the American Legion on Wednesday nights.

Photo by Mary Lou Wendell

was a fun thing, because there wasn't anybody doing it. Everybody thought it was fun coming out Sunday morning."

The two owned and ran Keller's Restaurant and Bed and Breakfast from 1989 through 1997. In addition to taking in guests, they ran a restaurant and served three meals daily. They employed 17 people and operated year-round. "We got to meet a lot of people, it was very enjoyable," she said.

Her husband is retired, but Parker still works during the day as a nanny. So she does the bulk of preparation for the weekly meals on Monday or Tuesday nights.

Parker said she will continue doing the meals into the summer. She is not sure when they will stop. "When we get tired, I guess."

"I've always been cooking and preparing food. And Robert's always been right there helping out," Parker said.

Big picture needed for Neighborhood Plan

The Peaks Island Neighborhood Association Steering Committee has set aside a one-half hour meeting to finalize the Peaks Island Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan on Tuesday, February 15, at 7:00 pm in the community room. All residents and property owners are welcome to attend.

To read the Neighborhood Plan, go to www.pinainfo.org and click on resources and documents.

The following is an opinion piece written by island resident Jenny Yasi.

BY JENNY RUTH YASI

We've been hearing a lot about it, but what exactly is a "neighborhood plan?"

A good neighborhood plan shouldn't be a list of projects to build, or new laws to pass but I think the people who say we just want to "get this done," are thinking of a Neighborhood Plan in the wrong way.

A neighborhood plan, just like a household plan, or a state plan, is something that will never be entirely done. A good neighborhood plan says "these are issues that need to be addressed," but it leaves open to discussion the many possible ways of addressing those issues.

For example, 75 percent of respondents to the Peaks Island Community Survey (which was about equally divided between summer and year-round residents) strongly agree, agreed, or were neutral that noise has become a threat to the quality of life on Peaks Island. There are many, many potential ways of addressing this issue, and it's beyond the scope of a neighborhood plan to spell out all the possible solutions. In spite of the complexity of these sort of issues, noise pollution can and should fall without controversy into our neighborhood plan, because noise pollution is an issue which deserves to be addressed. The current draft doesn't mention noise as an island issue.

Another issue on the neighborhood plan is recreation. A plan for recreation should be looking at the island as a whole, but the Peaks Island Plan as it currently stands seems aware only of one need: a skateboard park. A skateboard park isn't even a plan for teen recreation. It's a plan for skateboarders.

Neighborhood plans should describe criteria, which later can be used to inform and evaluate and score community proposals as they rise. What are criteria? When planning for teens, one criterion in the plan might be to provide a variety of activities. Another might be that public programs or facilities ought to offer at least "light" supervision. Another criteria might be to prioritize teen programs which offer credentials or certificates of achievement. This leads to many possible implementation strategies beyond building skateboard park. Can we subsidized the cost of sailing lessons and tennis courts at TELA? Can we provide a teen swim/dive/kayak program? Is there energy on the island for a community recreation facility that can address the needs of all age groups?

A neighborhood plan is the big picture that can hold all our best ideas. In good planning, if one wheel is squeaky, we recognize it's risky to grease just that one. We need to check them all.

The current draft of the neighborhood plan, woefully to all who have sweat over it, has simply not arrived yet at the point where it really is a plan. Finishing it—editing, revising, refining—is essential to fulfill all the hard work everyone has contributed just to get it to this point. Hang in there! Support the rewrites! Then when someone does propose something like a skateboard park or an expansion of the library or an education grant, they can compare that specific proposal up against the criteria for successful community that we've described in our neighborhood plan. Planning means using foresight to coordinate efforts, to save money and resources, to plan on knocking down more than one pin with the ball.

It took a hissy fit, but The Peaks Island Neighborhood Association (PINA) is now slightly backpeddling on their position that this version of the Neighborhood Plan—in many areas just a listing of pet projects that certain people wanted to get done—is the final, finished draft. PINA erred in attempting to close the plan to comments. Approving the Peaks Island Neighborhood Plan shouldn't be tantamount to offering pre-approval and closing discussion on a some-

times controversial list of community proposals.

The reason I worked so hard on the Peaks Island Community Survey, which received about 600 responses from island property owners and residents, (divided almost equally between summer and year-round

residents), is because people who attend meetings are not generally representative of the whole community. Outreach and openness is essential.

The survey reeled in hundreds of pages of scientifically gathered data, with 55 percent response rate. It is a tremendously broad reflection of island issues and attitudes. Results are available and analyzable at the Peaks Island Library. Cross-search questions please see PLAN, page 8

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Publishers: Mary Lou Wendell/David Tyler

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This island life



BY GEORGE ROSOL

Notes from the most recent meeting of the Peaks Café Codger Conference. One old-timer tells how, in his home, a single tablecloth was used at all meals for a month and then folded into the big soup pot as a flavoring ingredient. Mighty tasty, he swears.

Instead of slate boards, the classroom walls of Peaks Island school were once coated with a rough black paint that served as a chalkable surface. The eighth grade classroom's "board" had a long crack in the plaster where the paint just would not stick. It ran in a jagged white line across the length of the wall. Good use was made of this line. In geography, it became the Nile, the Ohio, the Amazon, and the mighty Mississippi rivers. The plaster line and its tributaries were, in science and math, veins in leaves, bones of the body, and lines for fractions and long division. Blackboards were hurriedly installed as a bare necessity once the maturing student body began using the cracks to sketch reclining nudes.

Peaks School staff often did double duty. The janitor taught the building trades, including the language and work habits essential for success in construction. Many of the smaller cottages on Peaks were said to be built by sixth and seventh graders. Eighth graders supervised. Some are still standing. The cottages, that is.

Tires. Old air. Someone says that he recently deflated a tire from an ancient Toyota and detected the faint odor of sushi with hints of teriyaki and wasabi. Wheel assembly at Toyota could have been located near the cafeteria. Air in a Volkswagen tire smelled of schnitzel and sauerkraut. One old island tire gave off the smell of the back shore fire in the 50s, somebody says. Then came old air with the smell of booze and bait fish. Ahh, the winds of times past. The meeting closed with the benediction, "Never pay more than 3 cents a pound for cabbage."

He is a German coon cat and his name is Herr Bahl. He is the leader of the Brackett Point colony of feral cats of Peaks Island. We speak one wintry morning. I, sitting on an Island pioneer's headstone, share my bagel with Herr Bahl. He speaks with a bit of Alsatian accent and a hint of meow. I am not amazed. If a talking cat is to be found anywhere in the world, why not Peaks?

He says that his colony is one of five on the island. Each group numbers several dozen—not counting part-timers, associates, and trainees. Most come from comfortable homes. Some summer cats were left Home Alone. If conditions are not ideal, a cat will bolt, says the top cat. Each has a story. Herr Bahl went feral after he made the mistake of speaking a few words to his owners. He was immediately slapped into a cage while they frantically searched for an agent who would believe there exists a talking feline. Bahl made his escape after telling a Girl Scout that he would buy cookies if freed to get his checkbook.

One pet was constantly criticized by a comics-crazed keeper for not being more like Garfield. Another was forced to watch the musical Cats at least once a week. When he showed up at the colony, he could purr his way through every tune of that show. Many cats were dropped, inverted, at least once a week, to show that they would land on their feet. Some stopped flipping and then exited at the first opportunity.

We talk of survival—especially in winter. Houses on posts are warm hideaways, lying next to a deer's belly is luxury. Handouts galore. Many cat owners forget what their pet looks like in the crowd. Feral cats will resist re-domesticating. You can't go back, says Herr Bahl. With that, he excuses himself and turns to go. And he is gone. This interview taught me that Island cats have options. And that cat owners who prize their pets should know who their cats' friends are, where they go at night, and at what time they expect to be home. Incidentally, I do see Herr Bahl

from time to time, and he sees me. He keeps his distance but always greets me with Me-owr. After all he is a cat.

A dog jumped ship from an Australian freighter that was moored near Peaks Island during WWII. It swam to shore and wandered on to U.S. Army property. It was a strange looking animal. Very large, with a shaggy dirt-brown coat and long muscular hind legs ending in enormous feet. It could have been accurately mistaken for a tiny kangaroo, considering it also sported a pocket in its abdomen.

No one knew at the time that it was a cross between a standard poodle and a kangaroo. A rare poodaroo. Bred for strength, speed, and the ability to leap over tall obstacles in a single bound, this superdog was made mascot and named Boing. Boing Boing for short. It also served as messenger and made express trips to the post office carrying mail in its pooch pouch and, if space permitted, returning to base with small grocery items. It was quite a

sight—rising puffs of dust as the poodaroo bounced along the island's gravel roads.

But Boing Boing grew terribly homesick for the outback, packed its pouch, and was last seen paddling out to the nearest freighter hoping to hitch a ride. It never looked back. Some time later, a seaman on the North Atlantic convoy run said he saw this strange big-footed dog-like critter raising puffs of snow as it bounded through the streets of Murmansk. Boingovich rides again!



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Islanders sure know how to have a good time! From top left, clockwise: Tara Fahey smiles because she survived the midwinter ocean plunge and she raised more than \$700 for tsunami victims; the plunge; the primary mover and shaker behind the fundraiser, Heather Erico; Jane Newkirk leads the way out of the water; onlookers drink coffee and stay warm while cheering on their fellow islanders.

Photos by Mary Lou Wendell and Tim Nihoff

OCEAN DIP, from page 1

stroke and the sunshine helped." She raised about \$350. "It was a last-minute paint job," Newkirk said of her body art. Also, the advice I got was the less clothes the better. What a blast. I could probably do this again."

Tara Fahey went in twice for the Cockeyed Gull. "It was actually great," Fahey said. "It was not as cold as I thought it would be." She raised about \$700, she said. "Walking down here, I was quite scared, but I knew it would be fine since it was warm outside. I knew it wouldn't be that bad."

"This is just amazing that so many islanders came out at 9 o'clock on a Sunday," said Lisa Lynch, owner of Peaks Café, referring to people who came early. "I think that Heather [Erico] deserves this huge round of applause."

Marcy Alves, who was one of the women dressed in a suit, said she jumped in the water to "raise money and have fun...It was fun. It was also really cold. I got an ice cream headache."

The idea of a winter dip was talked about by several people for quite a while before it was decided to do a plunge to raise money. Island business owners and employees realized that an unrestricted plunge would mean too many people trying to raise money. So it was decided to limit the number of people who actually jumped into the water to one from each business, and that smaller group would raise pledge money from the island. "It's just after Christmas, and no one has a lot of money, so we didn't want the entire island to go into the water, and ask people for money," said Heather Erico, one of the organizers of the event, and a cashier at Hannigan's Island Market, which donated the marshmallows and hot chocolate.

"We are so lucky here on Peaks," said Erico. Rarely does "anything happen to us as a community that is bad. We are an island community that has a lot, able to do something for island communities who don't have much of anything."

The idea of a plunge into the ocean was

symbolic, since the sea in the Indian Ocean basin was so destructive. "A plunge seemed like a way for the ocean to do a lot of good," Erico said.

Until all the pledges are in, organizers won't know how much was raised, but it will be a large amount, Erico said. When it is all tallied, a receipt will be created and framed with a photo of the dip, to be hung in the community center.

The event encapsulated the generosity of Peaks Island residents. "The reason that it worked, was that everyone who was asked to do something or provide something, did it," she said. "You can't stress enough the generosity of people's time, effort and money, and that sums up Peaks Island."

Erico said that any conflict in the timing of the event with church services was an oversight.

Among the numerous volunteers who helped make the event possible were the Peaks Island Fire Department, which provided personnel, a fire truck and an ambu-

lance. Paul Erico, Patty Latham and Pete Flynn did a lot of work preparing the beach, providing marshmallow-toasting sticks and building and tending the fires.

Charles Raddis and Mary MacFadyen were the medical volunteers on hand. Jack Soley, Tom Bergh, Jonathan Chalfant and Island Police Officer Randy Richardson were in survival suits in the water, to help out if anyone needed it. "It was quite a cool community event," said Bergh.

And many people who work on the island but live on the mainland came out to take part, including Keith Ivers of Peaks Island Fuel and island police officers Steve Taylor and Randy Richardson.

Dippers who actually went twice into the freezing water included Alves, Jamal Cassis, Bob Love and Jeremy Semon. "That really takes guts," said Erico.

Erico herself took part in the plunge. "It was kick-ass cold, I'm never doing that again," she said.

COLD, from page 3

Chebeague Island during last year's colder winter.

For Bryand, working on a boat in the cold weather is not a problem. He said it's all a question of dressing warmly and having a good attitude. "I just like being outside," he said.

Winter storms can be a challenge. On the day of the blizzard, Jan. 23, Casco Bay Lines cancelled the 7:45 a.m. down bay boat, but did run the 7:45 a.m. trip to Peaks Island. Larger swells caused by some storms are not as difficult to navigate as choppy conditions, Bryand said. "It's the real short-interval waves that create a lot of havoc," he said. And the most dangerous part of operating in storms is landing at the island docks. The Long Island ferry wharf is particularly tricky in winter storms, Bryand said.

Even during a cold stretch, this winter is no match for the winter of 1979, according to Willard, who was early in his career with Casco Bay Lines.

In February of that winter, there was an eleven-day period, from Feb. 9-Feb. 19, during which the Portland temperature hit below-zero low temperatures every day, according to data on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Web site. On Feb. 10, the low was 12 below zero, on Feb. 11, it was 10 below zero, on Feb. 12 it was 11 below zero and on Feb. 13, it was 13 below. "They had ferries stuck in the ice, and they had to call towboats," Willard said.



Despite recent warm temperatures, snow that fell in January continues to cover the ground. Cars are not quite as buried as they were, but there's still plenty of snow for sledding at places like Tolman Heights. And more snow is on the way, according to weather predictions.

Photos by Arne Pearson, Mary Lou Wendell and Judit Biro

TAYLOR, from page 1
many of the teenagers on Peaks and many of the elderly residents, along with many other people. Taylor, 37, has been working for the Portland Police Department since he was 18. He chose to leave Peaks for regular patrol



Officer Steve Taylor spent his last day on Peaks Island in January. He will be missed by many islanders and was known for his concern for many island residents and for his focus on community policing.
Photo by Mary Lou Wendell

duty in Portland because he wants to spend more time with his children, he said. He has an 8-year-old son and an 11-year-old daughter. Working on Peaks made it too difficult

when it came to spending time with his kids in the evening because of his late night shifts on the island, Taylor said, adding that he will miss Peaks Island.

"I loved him," said Lisa Lynch, owner of Peaks Cafe. "He was so wonderful and had a good sense of humor and a lot of respect for the kids. He was very active at really being out there."

Lynch said she liked seeing him drive by on the fire truck, which Taylor often did to make sure the island's rescue equipment was in working order.

"He just created a positive police presence and he was funny," Lynch said. "We became friends. And he was good to a lot of people. He knew things were going on with them and he made sure they were okay. He truly did wellness checks."

"He really was a part of our community," Lynch added. "He will be missed."

Lynch and others gave Taylor a going-away card and presents at the cafe on the day he left. Deborah Kendall, who works at the cafe, said she gave him a pair of plastic handcuffs covered in sea glass.

"What was so great about him was his ability to do community policing," Kendall said.

Taylor said that even though he will be going back to patrolling his beat by car in town, his new area include Portland High School. So he will still get to see the kids from the island, he said.

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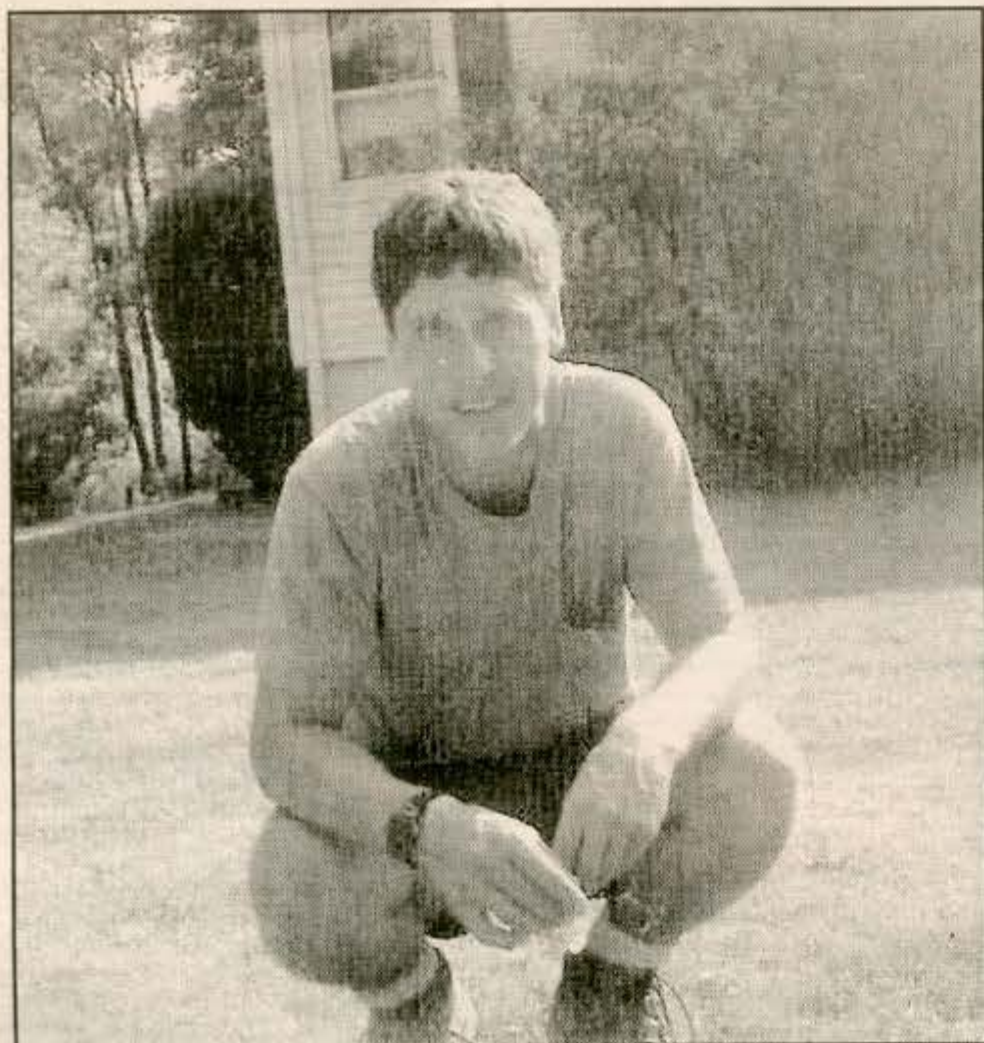
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James Bergstrom

BERGSTROM, from page 1
in our place for a week and we got to know them," he said. "It was a good start."

Bergstrom's hobby was making works in stained glass. "He put together a stained-glass version of the *Bagheera*, it's about the size of a poster, and framed it," said Kinney. This piece was displayed in the Casco Bay Lines terminal. "Jim made these as gifts," he said. Bergstrom gave him a stained glass

piece of a seagull on the beach. "He was very good at it."

"He loved the back shore, and beach-combing all around the island, it was one of his pastimes," Kinney said.

It's been a difficult week, as Bergstrom's friends struggle to cope with his death. His friends are surprised and saddened by "this terrible tragedy," said Kinney.

"I will miss him," Kinney said.

Island Police Log

Island Police Log
December, 2004

Dec. 4: Parking complaint, Willow Street; criminal trespass, Alder Brook Road; EMS call, no address given.

Dec. 6: Alarm/burglary, Merriam Street; 911 hang-up calls, Spruce Ave.

Dec. 7: Audible alarm, no address given.

Dec. 8: Check well-being, Upper A Street; EMS call, seizures, unclear address.

Dec. 10: Burglary, City Point Road.

Dec. 12: Property found, no address given.

Dec. 16: EMS call, pregnancy, no address given.

Dec. 17: Civil complaint, Lower A Street.

Dec. 19: Assist citizen, no address given; EMS call, Island Avenue; EMS call, Central Avenue.

Dec. 21: EMS call, breathing problems, no address given.

Dec. 23: EMS call, assist police, no address given.

Dec. 24: Juvenile offense, Central Avenue.

Dec. 27: Check well-being, Willow Street; test call, Island Avenue.

Dec. 28: Open door/window, Island Avenue.

Dec. 29: Assault, Upper A Street.

Dec. 30: EMS call, service run, no address given.

Dec. 31: Motor vehicle stop, New Island Avenue; motor vehicle stop, no address; EMS call, chest pains, Whitehead Street; EMS call, seizures, Pleasant Avenue.

January, 2005

Jan. 1: Keep the peace call, no address given; Police and EMS call, drug overdose, no address given.

Jan. 3: Assist citizen, Upper A Street.

Jan. 4: Follow up, violation of paperwork, motor vehicle stop and keep the peace at second address on Upper A Street.

Jan. 6: Keep the peace call, Upper A Street.

Jan. 7: EMS call, Torrington Point Road; EMS call, breathing problem, Lower A Street.

Jan. 10: Animal complaint, Island Avenue; Alarm/burglary, Oak Lane; theft, no address given.

Jan. 15: Test all hands, Island Avenue.

Jan. 16: Test all hands, Brackett Avenue; EMS call, Adams Street.

Jan. 17: Check well-being; Central Avenue; alarm/burglary, Island Avenue.

Jan. 18: Investigation, no address given; EMS call, no address given.

Jan. 19: Investigation, New Island Avenue; check well-being, one address on Willow Street; animal complaint, Island Avenue; check well-being, second address on Willow Street; EMS call, public assistance, Adams Street.

Jan. 21: EMS call, Luther Street.

Jan. 23: Broken-down motor vehicle, no address given; assault, Upper A Street; escorts, no address given.

Jan. 24: Animal complaint, Oak Street; keep the peace, Sterling Street; alarm/burglary, Island Avenue; assist Fire Department, Island Avenue; domestic dispute, Seashore Avenue; EMS service run, no address given; EMS call, assist police, no address given.

Jan. 25: Follow-up, Seashore Avenue; check well-being Upper A Street.

Jan. 27: EMS call, breathing problem, Luther Street.

Jan. 31: Police called to accident, one address on Island Avenue; 911 hang-up calls, Central Avenue; EMS call, fractures, second address on Island Avenue.

PLAN, from page 4

tions on the survey to find out things such as how many dogs live in different parts of the island, or how summer residents feel about cars as compared to year-round residents, or how parents of island teens feel about a skateboard park. Survey comments were gathered using a scientific method, and they represent the island more accurately than comments repeated more times by fewer people and compiled less scientifically at meetings.

PARKING, from page 1

front and rear lots, located next to the Eastern Prom Trail.

Right now there are 30 islanders who park in the front lot and 30 islanders who park in the rear lot, according to Staples. The front lot has 79 spaces and four handicapped spaces; the rear lot has 66 spaces and four handicapped spots. In addition, there are 64 islanders in the Fore Street lot, which has about 120 spaces. The Fore Street lot is not part of the first phase of Ocean Gateway construction.

The impact that Ocean Gateway will have on islander parking, and the logistics of a shuttle system concerns Joe Kane, president of the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association.

"I think it's hard," Kane said. "It means that people will have to manage to meet buses and haul stuff on and off the buses, in addition to getting into their cars."

Then there's the problem of catching the shuttle buses. If only one bus per boat is operating, it's likely that "a lot of people are going to miss the shuttle," Kane said.

"It strikes me as awkward, at best," he said, about the shuttle plan. "I think that communication with the city on this is important."

Tom Fortier, island/neighborhood administrator, urges residents to keep track of this issue. "It's real important for island residents to continue to stay on the policy-makers radar screen by contacting city councilors and city personnel to remind them that an a plan for island parking is essential," he said.

The project will be a balancing act, said City Councilor Will Gorham, who represents the city islands. "My concern is to cause the least disruption for islanders," he said.

Islanders may get more time to use the Fore Street parking lot. Right now it functions as an islander-only lot from November through April. The off season permit used to cost \$100 for the winter. From May through October it is a general parking lot, with permits costing \$80 per month. Permits for the

front lot are \$80 per month and the rear lot costs \$50 per month.

The Fore Street lot had been slated to become a parking garage under Ocean Gateway plans. But the City Council's Community Development Committee (CDC) decided to go with a plan proposed by Riverwalk L.L.C., led by Fred Forsley, owner of Shipyard Brewing Company, and developer Drew Swenson. Riverwalk would instead build a garage on brewery land surrounded by Fore, Hancock and Middle streets. This proposal calls for a garage that could be as large as 1,100 spaces and 10,000 square feet of retail development.

In phase 1 of the project, a 620-space garage would be built. The CDC would lease 310 of those spaces, said Jack Lufkin, director of the city's Economic Development Division. The city will use these spaces to replace island parking lost to Ocean Gateway. However, these spaces will be leased at market rates, Lufkin said.

The CDC's garage lease for the 310 spaces is for five years, with the option to extend it another five years.

However, if the CDC ever terminates the lease, the garage owner must always keep 150 spaces available for island residents, Lufkin said. "We wanted to make sure that islanders were taken care of," he said.

If the Riverwalk proposal goes forward, there would be no immediate project slated for the Fore Street parking lot. Mead said if the Riverwalk proposal is approved, the Fore Street lot could function as a site to move city-owned parking affected by Ocean Gateway. "As we're doing the construction work, we'll be using all available property that we own as a way to facilitate parking, and that may require some shifting around."

The first vote on the Riverwalk garage proposal is set for the Feb. 23 City Council meeting. Final action is slated for the March 7 meeting. City council meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 389 Congress St.

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Across

1. With skill
5. See 33 Down
10. With 37 Down, PRAC-TITIONER OF ROAD RAGE?
14. Judicial document
15. Protection
16. First-rate
17. DIG IN YOUR YARD?
19. Circle
20. Part of EST, (abbrev.)
21. K. Costner played this law-man
22. Ferris wheels and carousels
23. Sixth from the Sun
25. Black (plural)
27. The GOP, for now
28. MEALS ABOARD SHIP?
31. Highly excited
33. Sailplanes, perhaps
34. Game piece
35. Pretentious people put them on
36. Convey
37. Swiss national hero
38. Harem room
39. Thai meat on a stick

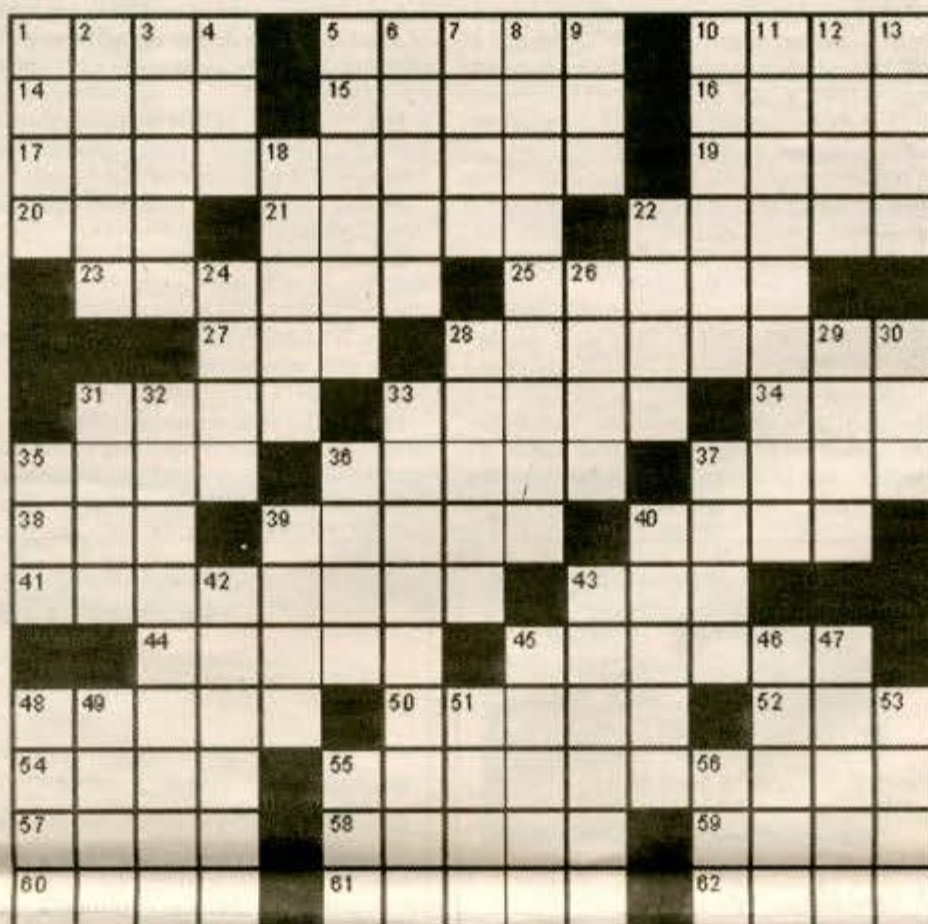
40. With 59 Across and 2 Down, LITTLE LEAGUE?
41. Serving of soup, perhaps
43. CA airport
44. Sickie
45. Guard
48. Plot or conspiracy
50. Trendy dos
52. Feed
54. Having knowledge of
55. DRIVE-BY BARBER?
57. Musical direction for both
58. Silly fools
59. See 40 Across
60. East in Dresden and Berlin
61. Totted up
62. Tribe of Northern Quebec

Down

1. Shoemakers' tools
2. See 40 Across
3. Beatle Paul's late wife
4. So far this year, to a CPA
5. Sudden difficulties (British)



Solution to last issue's puzzle



WASTE, from page 1

household hazardous waste can be as much as \$6 per gallon. The grant stipulates that the funds will also be used so that the collection and recycling of electronic items, such as computer and television monitors, can be handled at the facility. In addition, automotive fluids will be collected. Shipping household hazardous waste from Peaks to the mainland will be handled by an independent contractor, to be hired by the city's Department of Public Works.

Of the other Casco Bay islands, only Chebeague Island has a hazardous waste pick-up. The town of Cumberland, to which Chebeague belongs, does budget for disposal on an annual basis. Clean Harbors, a national provider of environmental and hazardous waste management services, travels to Chebeague one day each summer, during which time residents can bring any hazardous waste they've been storing. Clean Harbors then barges all waste off the island and takes it to a disposal facility on the mainland.

Of the other islands in Casco Bay, the majority rely on residents to find their own methods of disposal. Says Roger Berle, of Cliff Island, "Basically, there are a bunch of responsible people who will go to any lengths to make sure waste is disposed of properly, and there are unfortunately people who are less responsible."

What happens, exactly, if someone is "less responsible"? In maintaining the delicate balance of an island's ecosystem, improper disposal of household hazardous waste can be disastrous. "Islands accentuate limits," explains Tom Fortier. "If limits are exceeded on the islands, we're in a lot of trouble." A lot of trouble can mean a wide range of things, according to Fortier, including the "elimination of an island's water supply for years, if an aquifer were contaminated."

In eastern Casco Bay, residents of Bailey, Orrs and Sebacodegan islands, which are part of the town of Harpswell, can take auto batteries and waste oil to the recycling center. Television, computer monitors and propane tanks are accepted, for a fee, at the town transfer station. However neither facility accepts any other hazardous waste, liquid paint, antifreeze or medical waste.

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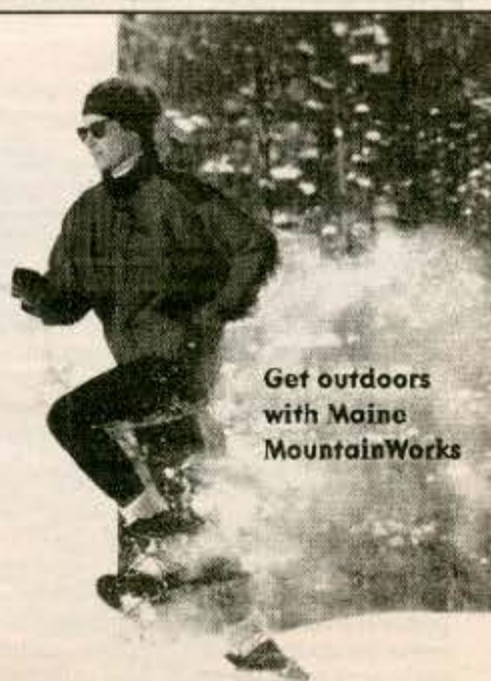
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Illustration by Jamie Hogan

Star Gazing

BY MICHAEL RICHARDS

While mighty Jupiter may outshine all other stars and planets in the pre-dawn sky, Saturn dominates the evening sky and news this month, with up-close photos of its clouds and rings "on line" for all to see (saturn.jpl.nasa.gov), beamed back to Earth from the Cassini-Huygens (Cah-see'-nee-Hoy'-genz) spacecraft circling Saturn. The Huygens probe was Europe's baby, carried dormant seven years by NASA's mother ship, Cassini. On Christmas Eve, 2004, Huygens

jettisoned itself away and fell toward Titan, Saturn's largest moon (and largest in our solar system). Once it hit Titan's murky atmosphere, it popped its chute and slowed down gradually, as its camera clicked and sensors measured, its eyes and ears and nose alert. But would it crash and die on Titan's surface, or sink beneath it, before it sent its findings back to Earth?

Silence first ... and then a beep, a metal heartbeat, faint but clear. It then awoke and opened up its camera-eyes again, and beamed its findings to Cassini, which sent them back to Earth. The first photos to arrive were taken five miles up—like looking out the window of an airplane—and showed an Earth-like shoreline, rivers, valleys, mountains, seas and islands: clearly liquid, but at 290 degrees below zero, it can't be running water. Then it sent us photos of its landing area, a rocky shoreline, methane mudflats, with thick red haze above. Titan's "water" is liquid natural gas, forming clouds, then raining down and seeping into the porous icy gravel. Thank goodness there's no oxygen, or else a spark would touch it off and make a bang too big for words.

Saturn reached its opposition to the sun just last month, and it's just past perihelion, its closest to the sun, so it is also closer to Earth than usual. It rises in the east each evening, a bright pale-yellow, just below the Gemini twin stars Castor and Pollux. It's tipped back at 26 degrees, showing us the southern face of its spectacular ring-system.

Saturn is also a whopping 22.4 degrees north of the celestial equator now, so it's quite high in the sky and easy to see—a prime target for those with scopes.

The Pleiades (plee'-ah-deez) star cluster is directly overhead in early evening. It's also called The Seven Sisters, but most people can see only six stars of the hundreds that it holds. At 100 million years old, it's a relatively young cluster, and it moves as a group through space, cutting a swath through a cloud of dust which long-exposure cameras show. Our Sun takes a month to rotate once, but some of Pleiades' stars rotate 200 times as fast, making them quite oblate, or fat. The alpha star in Pleiades is Halcyone (hal-si'-a-nee), 10 times the size of the sun. "Queen of Calm Seas," quieting the oceans for two weeks after winter solstice—hence the Halcyon Days.

Feb. 1: Sunrise is just before 7 a.m., and sunset is just before 5 p.m., as we approach 10 hours of sunlight to start the month.

Feb. 2: Last quarter moon is high at sunrise, moderating tide and current.

Feb. 5: Crescent moon sits just below Mars this morning, for those who brave the back deck of the 6:15 a.m. boat to town.

Feb. 7: Moon is now at perigee, closest to Earth this month, increasing its effect on oceans here.

Feb. 8: The new moon combines the pull of moon and sun, exaggerating more the rise and fall of tides around the world.

Feb. 9: With perigee-new moon so re-

cent, tides will crest at 11.4 feet today at 11:02 a.m., not quite as high as last month, so the 11:15 boat shouldn't have to be canceled again. Low tide is 1.4 feet below normal at 5:25 p.m., so the ramp will lead steeply down to the 5:35 p.m. boat home tonight. Let's hope it isn't slippery, too!

Feb. 16: First quarter moon is high at sunset, moderating tides and current.

Feb. 18: Tides have quieted again, with barely 5.5 feet separating high from low.

Feb. 19: Tonight the waxing gibbous moon's a pearl, half sunk in a velvet sea, with Saturn just below it in the east-south-eastern sky.

Feb. 23: Full moon rises at 4:31 p.m. and sets at 6:35 a.m., reflecting back a path of light upon the sea for those who take the early boat to town and evening boat to Peaks.

Feb. 26: This morning Jupiter hangs below the waning gibbous moon.

Feb. 27: When it's daytime here in Maine, and midnight on the other side of Earth, the moon will occult Jupiter. In our pre-dawn sky, Jupiter now sits just above the Moon as sunlight slowly fills the air and blinds us to the glimmering charms above.

Feb. 28: The sun rises now at 6:19 a.m. and sets at 5:28 p.m., providing nearly 11 hours of light. The sun's apex is also climbing higher in the sky each day, and it will soon begin to warm the frozen northern half of Earth and melt the snow and ice, to let fresh water run again, as methane does on Titan.

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Tuesday Evenings 7-9pm beginning Feb 22nd

Limit 8 participants; cost \$120 for 8 weeks

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*Pat Schneider, writer

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straight?" Feet shuffle around under the table. "Now go to work, hand-writing detectives!"

To the children, it is a mad-cap game. But for Trefethern-Kelley, there is a method to the madness. Each gesture is tied to a concrete goal. Even the kindergartners, who began their morning lesson with a kind of backbend—except with flat stomachs—were working with a subtext. "We made our bodies into 'tables,'" she explains, "because upper body weight-bearing is very important for the development of the arches in the hand. Those arches help children separate their power side—the pinky side you use to open a bottle—from the skill side—the precision side, where your thumb is and where the most dynamic movement, like writing, comes from." When children are in preschool, they use their hands together for "gross grasps." By kindergarten, they're be-

ginning to use the skill side to do things like lacing, zipping, cutting and writing. "That all comes from proper arch development," she says. And, lest you think the licorice eating was simply for the joy of sweets, think again. "The fine motor skills involved in cutting the licorice and then spearing it with a toothpick are reinforced when they eat," says Trefethern-Kelley. "With these young children there's still a sensory aspect to learning. They remember so much better when there's an oral component—so chewing licorice, the mouth movement, the breathing, the taste, that's a lot of sensory reinforcement built in."

Karen Houppert is a Peaks Island resident and freelance journalist whose book on military wives with deployed husbands ("Home Fires Burning: Married to the Military—For Better or Worse") comes out in March.

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bake sale, a silent auction, and inexpensive Valentine gifts for sale. Call 775-1474 or go to www.spiralarts.org for more information.

History docents

Portland's History Docents celebrate their tenth anniversary in February. Island resident Bill Hall is recruiting for the Portland's History Docents program, a ten-week training class for people who would like to become volunteer guides at area museums. As program manager, Hall is putting together the tenth-annual class of this innovative program. About 350 people, including several Peaks Islanders, have completed the training and gone on to work in six of

the area's historical attractions. The Portland's History Docents sessions are held at the Maine Historical Society every Thursday morning, 9 a.m. to noon, beginning Feb. 17 and concluding April 21. Volunteers for this free training receive lectures on area history, art, and architecture and training on good guiding techniques. Graduates are asked to serve at least six hours per month at a site of their choosing. Participating institutions are the Portland Observatory, Greater Portland Landmarks, Portland Harbor Museum, Tate House Museum, Victoria Mansion, Wadsworth-Longfellow House, and Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad. Graduation will take place at the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum on May 5. Call Bill Hall at home at 766-2514

or at work at 774-5561, ext. 120, for more information.

The wreck of S.S. Portland

There will be a screening and discussion of an hour-long documentary "The Wreck of the Portland," at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 10, at the Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress Street. Ben Haskell, Maritime Heritage Resources Coordinator for the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, will present a screening and discussion of "The Wreck of the Portland," an hour-long documentary produced by the Science Channel that chronicles the 2002 discovery of the wreck of the S.S. *Portland*, one of New England's greatest maritime mysteries.

On Nov. 26, 1898, the 291-foot, paddle-wheel passenger ship, S.S. *Portland*, on route from Boston to Portland, was caught in a storm now known as the Portland Gale. Struggling through the night with raging seas and 90-mile-per-hour winds, the *Portland* finally sank with all 190 passengers and crew on board. Little of the shipwreck and few victims were ever recovered, and even the exact location of the tragedy was a mystery. During the summer of 2002, using undersea sonar and the imaging capability of a Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV), the discovery of the actual wreck of the S.S. *Portland* was finally discovered—104 years after the vessel's disappearance.

Veteran newsman writes about Peaks Island

Dick Dougherty is newspaper reporter, editor and columnist who worked for the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle and the Rochester Times-Union for 56 years, until his retirement on Jan. 1 of this year. Starting in 1977, he began writing a column called "The Dick Dougherty Report." Originally the column appeared three times a week; eventually it was shortened, and ran five times a week. His columns have been collected into a book, "Dougherty Revisited," which was published in the fall of 2004 (to order the book go to www.dickdougherty.com or e-mail the author at redougherty@earthlink.net).

Dick and his wife, Pat, first came to Maine on a camping trip to Acadia in 1963. In the late 1970s, their daughter enrolled in Bowdoin College, and they decided to look for affordable waterfront property. In 1980, returning from the final parents' weekend at Bowdoin, he and his wife, Pat, stopped for lunch at the Miss Portland Diner, when he noticed an ad for a cottage on Peaks Island. They took the ferry out the island, and rejected that property. They did spot a cottage they liked on the back shore, and decided to buy that one. "After that we spent every June at our 'Box on the Rocks,' as we called it, until builder Bobby McTeague upgraded it with a screened-in porch and a second story," said Dougherty.

His book includes 14 columns about Peaks Island, but he did not regularly write while on vacation. "I tried writing columns while we were there, but the minute I inhaled that salt air I'd get into my vacation mode and couldn't make my fingers move to make words appear on the computer," he said. He and his wife have given serious thought to moving to Peaks year-round. "Yes, the winters can be brutal but we could get used to it," he said. "We've both got masochistic streaks. Otherwise we wouldn't be living in Rochester, N.Y. would we?"

Dougherty has kindly allowed the *Island Times* to reprint two columns from his new book.

October the best month Down East

BY DICK DOUGHERTY

October is the best month up here Down East, we've decided.

The fall colors are stunning, the air is crystal clear and the stars are brilliant. But there is more to it than that:

The Summah People like us are back in Away. There is room to park Down Front and the landscaping competition is over.

Telephone service is not interrupted by visiting cruise ships.

(This summer one anchored in front of the microwave transmitter in Portland. Service to the island was restored as the tide changed, lowering the ship 10 feet and swinging it 180 degrees.)

The natives are in a good mood because the population is down to three digits and they have their island back.

Last week the islanders gave us wary looks, but when we explained that we were leaving next week they brightened up and told us to "have a good wintah."

Of course there is a downside. The quality of stuff at the island "transfer station" (formerly known as "the dump") falls off sharply. Some days the selection is so poor it's hardly worth the trip.

This visit was especially rewarding because I ended my unbroken string of repair and maintenance disasters by cleverly forgetting to bring my tool box.

So instead of drilling a hole to install a patio door lock and shattering the glass as I did

in June, costing me \$400, I called a carpenter. He charged only \$20, a saving of \$380.

The plumber still enjoys telling his friends about the time I broke the septic tank pipe with a pickaxe while planting a shrub.

One of the best ways to ingratiate one's self with these taciturn Maine building trades craftsmen, I've found, is to keep them supplied with personalized "crazy mainlander" stories.

This year was our first season without a winter tenant and I was tempted to risk stalling in another island comedy by single-handedly attempting that routine October ritual, "shutting off the water."

Veteran cottagers assured me "you can't go

wrong."

"You underestimate me," I told them.

Instead, I called plumber Donny Smith's answering machine.

"This is the guy who broke the septic tank pipe with the pickaxe. Tell Donny I was thinking of arranging to have the pipes

freeze, but I changed my mind," I told it.

Nicknames through the ages

BY DICK DOUGHERTY

One of the curious customs on Peaks Island, Maine, where we're heading at the end of this week, is the way the natives use the diminutive form when addressing grown men.

It's Bobby, not Bob. Kenny, not Ken. Donny, not Don.

It seems startlingly out of character for New Englanders to talk this way. Sure, in Georgia it's Jimmy and Billy Carter and in Texas is Billy Bob and Willy. We're used to that, just as we're used to men referring to fathers as "mah daddy."

But to call Will Willy in the land of Ay-Yah, Yup-Nope, Never-Chew-My-Cabbage-Twice taciturnity seems strange to me.

It's like calling FDR Franky or Stalin Joey. Would William the Conqueror been an awe-inspiring figure if they'd called him Billy?

Or how about Georgie Washington, Daddy of His Country? Or Tommy Jefferson? Or Julie Caesar and Gengy Khan?

What about Benjy Franklin, Alfie Einstein, Hank and Sammy Adams, Billy Jennings

Bryan, Billy Shakespeare, Abey Lincoln?

They sound as out of place as James Carter, Alphonse Capone, William Nelson or Amos and Andrew.

The dictionary defines the diminutive form as "expressing smallness, endearment or condescension," but none of these apply on Peaks Island.

One Donny we know up there is a plumber, fully grown and grizzled. Treating him with endearment or condescension could get you a pipe wrench in the chops.

The other Donny is built like the boulder wrestler he is. He digs in septic tanks by hand without disturbing your shrubs. Detractors call him the human backhoe, but rarely to his face.

(By the way, Donny in PeaksSpeak is pronounced Dawny.)

None of these folks have called me Dicky yet. If they ever do, which seems unlikely since I'm not even a naturalized islander, I'll have to consider whether to be pleased or insulted.

On the one hand it could mean I've been accepted as a not-bad-guy-for-an-off-islander-from-Away.

But on the other hand, it could mean that I am being dismissed as an insignificant pipsqueak out-of-state mainlander, unworthy of being taken seriously.

You never know with these Downeasters.

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Bodies and brains working together

Peaks Island occupational therapist is all about movement

BY KAREN HOUPPERT

On a Tuesday afternoon in December, the nine kindergartners at Peaks Island Elementary have bent over backwards to please Gail Trefethern-Kelley. Quite literally.

The group of five-year-olds has clustered in a circle to do a series of exercises ranging from standard stretches to breathing exercises (for example, slowly exhaling along with the vowel 'O' sound), and culminating in a sort of backbend—but with head up and stomach flat.

"This is our table shape," Trefethern-Kelley reminds the children. "And if we had a bowl of soup on our table and our table collapsed, what would happen to our soup?"

"It would spill!" the children chorus.

"Then straighten up your tables," she says, coaxing a few into the proper position, so that their stomachs are nice and flat.

Soon, Trefethern-Kelley or "Ms. Gail" as she is known to the students, has moved the children at a rapid clip through a few more movements and images—"Now reach up high with your left hand and pick the apples. Time to press the apples into apple sauce. Now, should we make some apple cider?"—and then talks them through the proper way to hold their scissors in preparation for cutting practice. In moments, the kindergartners are sitting quietly at a table, concentrating as they cut a string of licorice into pieces, then use a toothpick to stab the tiny pieces and eat them.

Island resident Trefethern-Kelley is an occupational therapist, working with the students to help them strengthen and develop their motor skills. While most of her time is spent rotating through three schools in Portland, once a week she comes to Peaks Island and Cliff Island to spend the day working with students here.

She is one of six visiting specialists whose weekly visits ensure that Island students get the full range of services and enrichments available to other students in the Portland School District. An occupational therapist has been coming to Peaks Island once-a-week for many years, both to help individu-



all students and to work in classrooms with all

Kindergartners at the Peaks Island School work with occupational therapist Gail Trefethern-Kelley, also pictured at right.

Photo by Karen Houppert



students.

At Peaks Island Elementary, Trefethern-Kelley does individual therapy with a few students who need extra help then makes her way through each of the four classrooms to make sure, as she puts it, "everyone's bodies are working together with their brains."

As an occupational therapist, Trefethern-Kelley is all about movement, both making sure kids have the strength and dexterity to control their movement (as in working on the fine motor skills necessary for writing) and making sure their movement compliments their academic work (as in developing good posture and non-disruptive ways to "get the wiggles out" so they can concentrate).

"Our body is an engine," she tells the children. "Sometimes it's revving too high and sometimes it's revving too low—and we need to bring it to the right spot." To help them reach that place, she employs a combination of methods, from breathing exercises to acupressure to "brain gym"—a series of movements that challenges students with strength-building activities (chair push-ups, for example), dexterity (doing two things at the same time), and plain old energy expending (bringing the energy up and out and then calming the kids back down through breathing and stretching). "These are ways of empowering them with knowledge and aware-

ness that they can get their bodies and brains in right spot to be active learners," she says.

An Ohio native who lived in New York City for many years before landing on Peaks Island in September of last year, the 37-year-old Trefethern-Kelley seems to enjoy the adventure of being a traveling teacher. On the morning that we meet, she is shaken but undaunted by a boating accident she was in an hour earlier when the water taxi she took to Cliff had engine problems and crashed into the dock repeatedly. It slowed her, but did not stop her from making her rounds: next stop, Peaks Island Elementary.

It's a different kind of commute than the subway she took in New York City, but Trefethern-Kelley has embraced the change. "Our goal for the last four years has been to move here," she says, explaining that her husband moved to the island last year and she joined him this fall when her contract with the New York City schools expired and she landed her current job with the Portland school district. "New York City was not an ideal place for us long term," she says, noting that she did not want to go back to Ohio either.

After visiting friends in the Portland area, she and her husband fell in love with Peaks. Since her husband is "a naturalist painter of flora and fauna," he could be surrounded by nature and also have enough studio space to work easily here, she says.

For her part, another occupational therapist's year-long leave of absence provided entrée to Portland Public Schools. To her further delight, the district's educational philosophy meshed with her own. "One great thing about Portland Public Schools is that they have seamless services," she says. "Which allows me to coordinate with teachers and work inside the classroom with all the students and outside the classroom with individual students who need extra help." Because of the small size of Peaks Island Elementary School—53 students in all—she is able to spend time in all four classrooms, working with the entire student body on the students' bodies.

It is testament to Trefethern-Kelley's skill and enthusiasm that the students are persuaded she's only there to have fun with them. The faces of Peaks Island's 17 first- and second-graders light up when she arrives on Tuesday mornings and there are smiles all around as she takes them through their paces—a series of exercises and some cross-lateral moves that have them giggling with the effort of keeping up with her attempts to "trick" them into missing one of her directional cues.

From there, she moves to a hand-writing poem she composed with some New York City colleagues to help the many kids who struggle to master proper printing. "No shrinkers or growers on uppers or lowers," she reminds the children who know exactly what she means and get right to work playing "handwriting detectives" as they circle all the letters that have shrunk or expanded beyond the lines on the handouts they've been given.

"By developing a language for careful handwriting, and sharing it with teachers, we can tease out who just didn't understand where letters should sit on line, versus who is having trouble actually controlling their pencil to get the letters to sit on the line," she explains to me.

To the students, she asks, "While I'm looking at you, I'm wondering if everyone is stacking their blocks?" She waits while the students straighten their spines, sitting higher in their chairs. "And if everyone's sitting with their feet flat on the floor and their back

please see THERAPIST, page 10

Community Notes

PTO Valentine box

The Peaks Island School PTO is offering a Valentine Sweetheart Box of treats, which will benefit the school. The boxes will be filled with homemade cookies and candies—made by island bakers, of course—and will cost \$10 per box. You can order by calling the Peaks Island School at 766-2528 or call Kathryn Moxhay at 766-2756, or Kathy Hanley at 766-5669. We will take orders until Feb. 9th, and will deliver your treats to you or your valentine on Feb. 14th.

Use the taxi

It has been noted by several taxi drivers that community members are not taking full advantage of the free, community taxi. Volunteers drivers have worked for entire days and received only one or two calls. Island residents are urged to call a day in advance to schedule trips, but people can call on the day of the trip, as well. The taxi is an island resource provided by dozens of volunteers and it is under-used.

Geology lecture

The second installment in the Community Lecture Series 2005 will be on Thurs., Feb. 10 at 7 p.m. at the Peaks Island Community Center. It will be led by Peaks Island resident Art Astarita. He will be speaking about the geology of coastal Maine. Astarita will answer questions such as: How was that rock in your backyard formed? What did the Maine

coast look like before the glacier? Where are the most interesting geologic spots on Peaks Island? He will be showing satellite imagery, photos, and other visuals. Upcoming lectures include: March 11, Cynthia Cole and others speaking about international travel, including time spent with the Peace Corps; April 14, Art Astarita speaking about groundwater on Peaks Island; May 12 - Scott Kelly speaking about birds in Antarctica. All lectures are held at the Community Center and begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted. There are still six openings for lectures during the year, so if you have thought about giving a lecture or know someone else who is thinking about it, it's not too late to sign up! Call or email Michele Tranes at 766-3014 or send an e-mail to mtranes@islandinstitute.org.

Winter carnival

On Sat., Feb. 12, the Peaks Island School will host its first Winter Carnival to raise funds for the UNICEF Tsunami Fund. A donation will be requested to attend the carnival, which will include indoor and outdoor events. Inside, there will be games, a bake sale, valentine making, food, face painting, a bean bag toss, a quilt raffle, ice cream making and musical chairs. Outside events include making snow people, a sled race/obstacle course, snowball targets and snow castle making.

Island knitting show

There will be a reception for a show featuring the work of Island knitters at the Gem Gallery, 62 Island Avenue, from 3-5 p.m. on Sat., Feb. 12. The work is for sale and proceeds will benefit the Peaks Island Children's Workshop. There will be hot cocoa and sweet treats at the reception. For those who cannot attend, the gallery will be open on Feb. 12 from noon to 6 p.m.

Houppert book party

There will be a book-release party to celebrate the March publication of Island resident Karen Houppert's new book, "Home Fires Burning: Married to the Military—For Better or Worse." The party will be held from 5-8 p.m. on Fri., March 11 at the Gem Gallery, Island Avenue. This nonfiction book profiles seven military wives whose husbands have been deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq or Korea over the last two years. It's a look at how the military treats women, how feminism has impacted the Army's family policies, and how Army wives struggle to hold on to their families and their identities under highly adverse conditions.

Vacation workshops

The Children's Museum of Maine today announced that it will be hosting a series of 2 to 3 hour workshops during February vacation week. The workshops, aimed at engaging visitors ages 6 and up, will be led by local artists, musicians, inventors and animal lovers. On Tues., Feb. 22, Marina Forbes, a native of St. Petersburg, Russia, will lead a workshop on Russian Nesting Dolls. Also

on Tuesday, kids can join an art workshop and create an acrylic-on-canvas masterpiece. In addition, Jules Vitali will teach how to make sculptures out of Styrofoam cups. On Wed., Feb. 23, kids will create with Legos in the morning and take part in a Big Builder Workshop in the afternoon. On Thurs., Feb. 24, Kwabena Owusu, a native of Ghana, will teach West African percussion. Also that day, children will learn about crafts and food from around the world. On Fri., Feb. 25, quilter Martha Winn will teach children how to design and sew their own animal-themed quilts and David Sparks, a Maine wildlife rehabilitator, will lead a workshop about animals. All workshops require pre-registration. Cost is \$13 for members and \$15 for non-members. Some workshops have an additional materials fee, ranging from \$5 to \$20. Space is limited. To register, call 828-1234, ext. 221 or send an e-mail to: Melanie@kitetails.com.

Valentine workshop

SPIRAL Arts Inc., presents "SPIRAL Hearts—A Valentine Workshop for All Ages." This intergenerational arts workshop will be on Sat., Feb. 12 from 1 to 5 p.m. at Immanuel Baptist Church, 156 High Street, Portland, Maine. Donations on a sliding scale from \$5 to \$12, or pay-what-you-can, will be received at the door. Area artists will lead workshops in making Valentine cards, Origami hearts, Valentine cookie baking, Valentine bookmarks, Valentine watercolor boxes, Valentine jewelry, Valentine prints, a love-poem writing workshop, and a love song circle. There will also be a Valentine

please see COMMUNITY NOTES, page 10